

Ocean Energy Bureau, Interior

§ 281.14

shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and may be published elsewhere.

(b) States and local governments, industry, other Federal Agencies, and all interested parties (including the public) may respond to a request for information and interest. All information provided to the Secretary will be considered in the decision whether to proceed with additional steps leading to the offering of OCS minerals for lease.

(c) The Secretary may request specific information concerning the offering of a specific OCS mineral, a group of OCS minerals, or all OCS minerals in a broad area for lease or the offering of one or more discrete tracts which represent a minable orebody. The Secretary's request may ask for comments on OCS areas which have been determined to warrant special consideration and analysis. Requests may be for comments concerning geological conditions or archaeological resources on the seabed; multiple uses of the area proposed for leasing, including navigation, recreation and fisheries; and other socioeconomic, biological, and environmental information relating to the area proposed for leasing.

[54 FR 2049, Jan. 18, 1989, as amended at 59 FR 53094, Oct. 21, 1994]

§ 281.13 Joint State/Federal coordination.

(a) The Secretary may invite the adjacent State Governor(s) to join in, or the adjacent State Governor(s) may request that the Secretary join in, the establishment of a State/Federal task force or some other joint planning or coordination arrangement when industry interest exists for OCS mineral leasing or geological information appears to support the leasing of OCS minerals in specific areas. Participation in joint State/Federal task forces or other arrangements will afford the adjacent State Governor(s) opportunity for access to available data and information about the area; knowledge of progress made in the leasing process and of the results of subsequent exploration and development activities; facilitate the resolution of issues of mutual interest; and provide a mechanism for planning, coordination, consultation, and other activities which the Secretary and the Governor(s) may

identify as contributing to the leasing process.

(b) State/Federal task forces or other such arrangement are to be constituted pursuant to such terms and conditions (consistent with Federal law and these regulations) as the Secretary and the adjacent State Governor(s) may agree.

(c) State/Federal task forces or other such arrangements will provide a forum which the Secretary and adjacent State Governor(s) may use for planning, consultation, and coordination on concerns associated with the offering of OCS minerals other than oil, gas, or sulphur for lease.

(d) With respect to the activities authorized under these regulations each State/Federal task force may make recommendations to the Secretary and adjacent State Governor(s) concerning:

(1) The identification of areas in which OCS minerals might be offered for lease;

(2) The potential for conflicts between the exploration and development of OCS mineral resources, other users and uses of the area, and means for resolution or mitigation of these conflicts;

(3) The economic feasibility of developing OCS mineral resources in the area proposed for leasing;

(4) Potential environmental problems and measures that might be taken to mitigate these problems;

(5) Development of guidelines and procedures for safe, environmentally responsible exploration and development practices; and

(6) Other issues of concern to the Secretary and adjacent State Governor(s).

(e) State/Federal task forces or other such arrangements might also be used to conduct or oversee research, studies, or reports (e.g., Environmental Impact Statements).

§ 281.14 OCS mining area identification.

The Secretary, after considering the available OCS mineral resources and environmental data and information, the recommendation of any joint State/Federal task force established pursuant to § 281.13 of this part, and the comments received from interested parties, shall select the tracts to be considered for offering for lease. The selected